

Continuum of Care Goals for FY 2001

The goals and action steps listed outline the strategy to carry out the vision of the Office of Homelessness Services and Emergency Assistance. The Permanent Housing Committee has the ongoing responsibility to devise a strategy that will implement the Homeless Continuum of Care goals as well as to prioritize applications submitted to HUD for funding. The Continuum of Care is a plan to improve housing and services. Its aim is to meet the specific needs of homeless persons and includes action steps to both end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. This plan increases Rhode Island's advantage in receiving competitive Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance SuperNOFA funding in addition to leveraging other resources needed to build a comprehensive system addressing homelessness.

Goal	Action Steps
<p>1. Overarching Goals</p> <p>Goal I: Further develop the state's capacity to address homelessness in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Housing Resource Commission's "Report on Homelessness" recommendations by securing passage of legislation for five million dollars for state housing fund in the FY 2001 budget to provide security deposits and first months rent for families and individuals to move into rental housing; fund homeless service providers to develop permanent housing with supportive services in scattered sites; award capital funding to leverage other housing resources to develop permanent rental housing affordable to households working at minimum wage; and, assure the continuation of homeless services at their current level by providing matching funds for HUD homeless grants. • Continue implementation of pilot programs .to increase the supply of affordable housing for homeless or at risk families and individuals/families with income at the level of SSI. • Continue to strengthen the work of the Housing Resources Commission's Office of Homelessness Services and Emergency Assistance to ensure continued cooperation and coordination of state departments, the private sectors, entitlement cities and all regions of the state including homeless and formerly homeless individuals toward ending homelessness. • Increase representation to include economic development/employment community and transportation authority. • Continue to hold regular focus groups of homeless/formerly homeless individuals to continuously update and identify gaps/needs. • Hold annual summit on homelessness and related issues.
<p>Goal II: Provide an appropriate array of supportive services to meet the varied health and social service needs of homeless persons through the mainstream health and human services programs and special programs for the homeless.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate and streamline access to mainstream services in childcare, health care, employment and training with the Department of Human Services housing liaison and community implementation task force for Welfare Reform and Welfare to Work programs to ensure that homeless families are assisted. • Follow up coordination with the state Departments of Economic Development, Human Resources Investment Council, Private Industry Councils, and Departments of Labor and Training, and Education to ensure that the needs of homeless and at risk persons are part of their job creation, workforce development, and educational plans as well as with the Department of Transportation to address the need for increased transportation services. Since transportation is an enormous barrier to access to employment and services, especially for persons outside of the core cities we will build on last year's progress by monitoring the effectiveness of the new Dept. of Transportation's Flex Schedule beginning 11/2000 by continuing dialog with Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority. • Research models for enhancement of multicultural services for homeless persons.

Goal III: Enhance inclusion of homeless and formerly homeless persons in the planning, funding, and implementation of homeless and prevention services. This involvement must occur at the state and entitlement cities, as well as within the individual provider organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on advisory groups established by People to End Homelessness and continue to identify, train and support participation of homeless/formerly homeless individuals • Provide training and support opportunities to provider organizations to assist them in further inclusion of consumers in their Board and management operations, as well as developing a plan to include reimbursement of any costs incurred by participants.
<p><u>2. OUTREACH & ASSESSMENT</u></p> <p>Goal I: Ensure continued funding and/or expansion of outreach initiatives so that persons living on the streets or in non-traditional abodes are provided with needed services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to prioritize programs for renewal through federal sources, and identify state matching resources through the Housing Resources Commission. • Continue to provide 20% supportive service match implemented in July, 2000 by state funding. • Promote new initiatives to respond to need for additional outreach, especially outside the core cities and for underserved populations through Emergency Shelter Grants, Supportive Housing Program application process and state resources.
Goal II: Monitor and continually improve statewide-computerized Housing Locator System, to provide ready information on affordable housing opportunities to residents of the state's emergency and transitional programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Housing Locator system in 33 linked emergency and transitional housing sites. <u>Phase I</u>, listing of affordable apartment/housing opportunities As well as landlord education. • <u>Phase II</u>, and increased availability of lifeskills education component for the homeless or those at risk or homelessness
Goal III. Develop and coordinate state and regional assessment, referral and intake systems to ensure that all individuals in need receive assistance in a timely fashion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regional availability of Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless' brochure listing shelter options. • As part of overall MIS project, develop a comprehensive and consistent intake/ assessment tool for the state's homeless providers. Provide comprehensive training to all agency staffs through the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. (See MIS goal page 3) • As part of MIS project continue to research models to explore opportunities to enhance intake and referral system
<p><u>3. EMERGENCY SHELTER</u></p> <p>Goal I: Strengthen current system in order to insure an adequate and high quality system of emergency shelter for individuals and families across the state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with RI Dept. of Human Services to review shelter funding process and seek increased state funding to ensure the stability of shelter funding by increasing state support to maintain current shelter capacity • Continue to improve and fund the family emergency apartment program established in July, 2000 to provide families with children emergency shelter if appropriate emergency shelter beds are not available • Continue to monitor current shelters for excess or overtaxed capacity. Where possible, resolve capacity problems through mergers or emergency expansion plans rather than development of additional sheltering agencies or programs.
Goal II: Increase the capacity of shelter providers to be effective and efficient through education/training or networking opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide and expand training and information sharing opportunities, and promote consistency in programming including annual conference. • Outreach to new shelters that develop through private and/or faith-based organizations to participate in statewide networking and training activities through the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless.

<p>Goal III: Develop a statewide Management Information System capable of identifying mainstream resources available to clients as well as meeting the administrative data requirements of individual and the policy and planning needs of the state. The system should build upon the current success of the Emergency Shelter Information Project, and be interactive with all relevant state agencies as well as to integrate the way agencies share information in order to link programs and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to seek funding and implementation of state-wide MIS system and • Continue to develop specifications for “Invitations to Bid” for vendors and host site/manager.
<p><u>4. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING</u></p> <p>Goal I: Provide an appropriate array of transitional programming and housing options to meet the needs of individuals and families in transition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify new state and municipal resources to stabilize the funding of existing transitional housing programs. • Continue funding of transitional housing through mainstream housing programs such as HOME, and Rhode Island Housing’s Next Step Transitional Housing Program. • Continue to promote and encourage collaborative approaches in the development of model transitional housing, when appropriate, to serve homeless individuals and families with supportive services needs that cannot currently be met through permanent housing options. • Continue to provide technical assistance to new or potential transitional housing providers through Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation and the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless.
<p><u>5. PERMANENT HOUSING</u></p> <p>Goal I: Promote the creation of additional permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of disabled, homeless Rhode Islanders.</p> <p>G</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue and expand technical assistance including provision of financial and program models, through Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation and regional, technical assistance providers, to assist sponsors in initiating or expanding their permanent supportive housing activity. • Establish a working group to promote and provide ongoing technical assistance. • Continue to promote and encourage collaborative approaches to ensure seamless transition to permanent housing. • Continue and expand use of mainstream housing programs such as HOME, CDBG, and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program to create permanent supportive housing. • Enhance state and entitlement city funding of permanent supportive housing and services. (For example, through securing state housing fund legislation)
<p>Goal II: Promote the availability of additional decent, safe, and affordable housing to prevent and end homelessness for Rhode Islanders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use and expand utilization of HOME, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and Thresholds program (bond funds to support housing for persons with serious mental illness) resources to increase the supply of affordable housing, especially permanent supportive housing. • Implement pilot project to increase supply of affordable units to the state’s current inventory and continue to seek state funding for affordable housing
<p>Goal III: Increase access to permanent public housing</p> <p>Increase utilization and acceptance of Section 8 vouchers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to facilitate meetings with public housing authorities, and interested parties to identify barriers to public housing for individuals and families. • Monitor & evaluate Section 8 program and identify barriers to utilization

<p><u>6. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION</u> Goal I: Improve housing stability through education and financial assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to enhance tenant education through the “Housing Locator” Tenant Education project through regularly scheduled training workshops for homeless individuals, families and domestic violence survivors to increase and retain appropriate permanent housing. • Continue to enhance the “Housing Locator” database of subsidized rental housing in Rhode Island, including public housing units, HUD rentals and other housing that has been developed with local, state, or federal funds. • Expand access to affordable housing through public education and outreach to increase the number of unsubsidized units from the private market by recruiting landlords from the private rental market. • Increase funding of the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) to prevent eviction.
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